

The 19th Special Forces Group...



PHOTO BY SARDAR LEMME

a breed
apart

By First Lieutenant Myke Hawkeye
19th Special Forces Group

The California National Guard's Team A, 19th Special Forces Group, is playing a unique and vital role in a terrorist-free world emerging from the rubble of 9/11.

It is ensuring that a new government will rise and survive from the ashes of the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon. The 80 Green Berets of the 19th Special Forces Group helped purge Afghanistan of terrorist influence and assisted with training an army to sustain the new nation.

The soldiers traded their civilian jobs as policemen, firemen, paramedics, federal agents, and many other walks of life to wear beards, civilian clothing, and even dress in the local Afghan garb, to fight terrorist forces and help build the military infrastructure necessary to maintain this new found peace. Company A, 19th Special Forces Group is making sure that it stays that way by helping build the Afghan Army.

Currently, Special Forces are the 'Tip of the Spear' in the Global War against Terrorism. The men of the California National Guard's Special Forces are part of this force and are in the fight against al Qaeda and Taliban forces located throughout Afghanistan and hiding in the Pakistan Border Mountains waiting for opportunities to strike.

The Special Forces' unique and unorthodox methods—according to Army standards—make them a breed apart. Many ride on horseback, on motorcycles, armored military vehicles, old Russian vehicles, and even souped-up trucks patrolling areas around U.S. Forces and Bases.

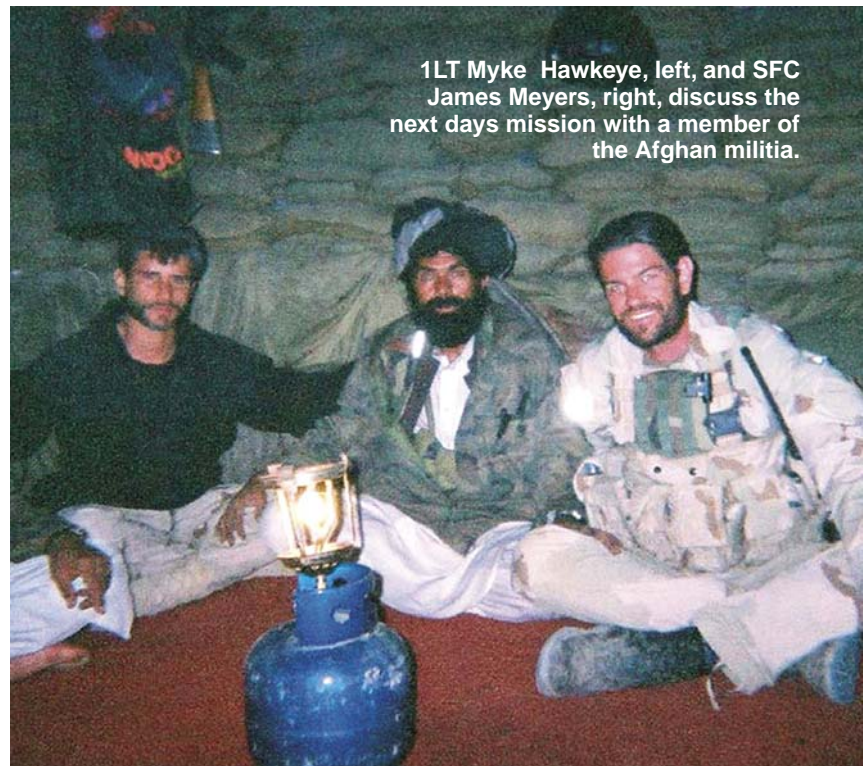
The Primary Mission of the men of the California Army National Guard's Special Forces is Foreign Internal Defense. While some members protect the local Afghan Militia Forces while they train in Unconventional Warfare, other members of the company are assisting the local Afghan Militia Forces with its regional security. The majority of the Special Forces have been very busy standing up a new army for a new nation. The Afghan National Army will be responsible for the security of the young government, which is no small task in an historically war-torn country.

Team A's task is even more formidable because of Afghanistan's numerous tribes and many languages. The teams must communicate with all these groups in order to train them in basic soldiering skills, unit tactics, planning, and operations. The unit has learned to overcome this challenge and has found creative ways to interact and deal with the daily tribal feuds, inter-clan rivalries, family vendettas, and other related

situations.

Team A had to recruit mature Soldiers who can operate at the grass roots level and who can communicate the strategic significance of implementing U.S. Foreign Policy. This maturity is critical in order for these Host Nation Forces to maintain the peace and avoid international incidents. As they develop and progress, they will live up to their nickname: "Diplomat Soldiers."

The California National Guard Green Berets cannot talk about all their missions. They are conducting a wide array of operations in support of the U.S. mission



1LT Myke Hawkeye, left, and SFC James Meyers, right, discuss the next days mission with a member of the Afghan militia.

to fight terrorism and rebuild the Nation of Afghanistan. Some of these missions are classified and cannot be disclosed, in order to protect the soldiers and their families back home.

The California National Guard's 19th Special Forces Group realizes the special significance of its skills. Using both their military skills and civilian experience, the members are helping create a nation and a 9/11 legacy. Their contributions are helping to make the world more free from terrorism, while ensuring that those who perished on September 11th, 2001 did not die in vain. 🐾